

# REED & REED



P.O. Box 370, Woolwich, ME 04579 Tel: 207.443.9747 Fax: 207.443.2792 [www.reed-reed.com](http://www.reed-reed.com)

February 14, 2023

The Hon. Mark Lawrence, Co-chair  
The Hon. Stanley Paige Zeigler, Jr., Co-chair  
Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology  
State House  
Augusta, Maine 04330

Re: Testimony in Opposition to L.D. 376, "An Act to Repeal the Law Regarding the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program"

Dear Sen. Lawrence, Rep. Zeigler, and members of the EUT Committee:

I write to urge you to oppose L.D. 376, "An Act to Repeal the Law Regarding the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program."

When the talented employees of Reed & Reed erected our first wind project in Mars Hill in 2006, we began a journey of growth and opportunity for our company and for the people of Maine. We learned a great deal with that first project and since then we have erected over 400 wind turbine generators in Maine. But what we didn't know before Mars Hill was that to serve the majority of Maine that is connected to the New England grid, the electricity Mars Hill generated would have to go through Canada because northern Maine was not connected to the rest of Maine's grid.

Since 2006 there has been plenty of debate about energy in our state and nation, but we know that most Mainers agree on the objectives: we want affordable, reliable, and Maine-made clean energy to power our homes and businesses. In Maine right now there is one opportunity that can help us achieve those objectives by providing affordable, clean and renewable energy that doesn't rely on a volatile and dirty fuel from some other part of the world.

The King Pine Wind Project, which has been proposed for an area in Aroostook County northwest of Houlton will bring enormous economic opportunity to that area. It will be connected to our power grid by a new transmission line. The Maine Legislature passed a law to encourage this type of investment in renewable power grid upgrades in northern Maine and the renewable energy industry responded with several attractive proposals to unlock the potential. To reverse that law now would do untold harm to Maine as a place of investment and to our progress toward meeting clean energy goals.

King Pine Wind would generate enough zero-emissions renewable energy to meet the needs of the equivalent of approximately 450,000 residential electricity customers. The cost of the wind power will save Mainers money on day one by costing less than the wholesale cost of power, a

recent study showed that adding resources like King Pine would lower energy market prices and provide significant cost savings for consumers.

King Pine is exactly the type of project that will provide long term, low-cost clean energy for Maine. And the benefits are not guesswork, as a new Maine Public Utilities Commission report shows clean energy projects like King Pine are providing meaningful savings to Mainer customers right now. Between December 2021 and November 2022, existing long-term contracts for renewable power saved Maine ratepayers nearly \$14 million.

In October, the Maine Public Utilities Commission selected King Pine and the associated transmission line after a robust competitive solicitation. The PUC withheld final approval, however, to explore the possibility of partnering with another state to spread the transmission cost. Fortuitously, in December Massachusetts indicated it is interested in participating, following a review of the benefits by a state agency. To reverse course now, as LD 376 proposes, would do permanent harm to future energy development in Maine and would tarnish the state's reputation as a reliable partner in clean energy.

Putting our energy dollars into local projects like King Pine will keep our money at home, allowing Mainers and Maine companies to help us make our important and also cost-effective clean energy transition. Building wind and transmission in northern Maine will put Maine people to work, bring tens of millions of dollars into communities through property taxes and community benefit agreements, and create work for years to come for a wide range of Maine businesses.

With our company having built nearly all of Maine's wind power projects, we have seen firsthand the economic impacts for local businesses, the job creation and skill training opportunities these projects create. As a Franklin County business owner once said to me, "You're our economic stimulus plan".

On behalf of our employees and indeed of all Mainers, I respectfully urge you to vote "Ought Not to Pass" on LD 376.

Thank you.

Jackson A. Parker  
Chairman & CEO  
Reed & Reed, Inc.  
Woolwich, Maine